Guidelines for Evaluating Writing Assignments in EIU’s English Department

Grades on written work range from A to F. The categories listed below are based on rhetorical principles and assume intellectual responsibility and honesty. Strengths and weaknesses in each area will influence the grade, though individual teachers may emphasize some categories over others and all categories are deeply interrelated.

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|  | A | B | C | D | F |
| Focus | Has clearly stated purpose or main idea/thesis quite thoughtfully and/or originally developed within the guidelines of the assignment | Has clearly stated purpose or main idea/thesis developed with some thoughtfulness and/or originality within the guidelines of the assignment | Has a discernible purpose or main idea/thesis which is not very clearly stated and is developed with limited originality and/or thoughtfulness; may have missed or failed to conform to some element of the assignment’s guidelines | Has no apparent purpose or main idea/thesis and/or shows little thoughtfulness and/or originality; may not conform to significant elements of the assignment’s guidelines | Has no purpose or main idea/thesis; shows little or no thoughtfulness and/or originality; may not conform to the guidelines of the assignment |
| Organization | Is logically organized but without overly obvious organization devices; has unity, coherence, strong transitions; has well-defined introduction, body, conclusion | Is logically organized; has unity, coherence, competent transitions; has well-defined introduction, body, conclusion | Is organized, but not necessarily in the most logical way; has unity and coherence but may make inconsistent use of transitions; has introduction, body, conclusion, one of which may be weak | Is somewhat organized, but is confusing to readers; shows significant problems with coherence, unity, transitions; no or poorly written introduction, body or conclusion | Is not organized; has little or no coherence and unity; poor or no use of transitions; no or poorly written introduction, body or conclusion |
| Development | Supports purpose or main idea with abundant, fresh details; details are specific and appropriate; uses sources well when sources are called for in the assignment | Supports purpose or main idea with sufficient details; details are fairly specific and appropriate; uses sources adequately | Supports purpose or main idea with details, but some parts of the paper are inadequately/inappropriately developed or vague | Makes an attempt to use details to develop purpose or main idea but is, for the most part, inadequately/ inappropriately developed | Does not develop main idea; may use sources inadequately/ inappropriately |
| ***Style & Awareness of Audience*** | Word choices show consideration of purpose and audience; shows thoughtfully and imaginatively constructed sentences; incorporates sources well | Word choices are appropriate to purpose and audience; sentences often constructed thoughtfully and imaginatively; incorporates sources adequately | Word choices are mostly appropriate to purpose and audience; sentences aren’t particularly thoughtful or imaginatively constructed; sources may sometimes be awkwardly incorporated | Word choices may be inappropriate to purpose or audience; sources incorporated poorly | Word choices are generally poor; sources are incorrectly or very awkwardly incorporated |
| *Mechanics* | Has very few grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors; uses appropriate documentation style correctly when necessary for assignment | Has minor grammatical, punctuation or spelling errors that do not interfere with reading of essay; uses appropriate documentation style correctly | Has some grammatical punctuation and/or spelling errors that occasionally interfere with reading of essay; uses appropriate documentation style but may have some errors | Has grammatical, punctuation and/or spelling errors that make reading difficult; documentation style may be poorly used | Has grammatical, punctuation and/or spelling errors that make reading very difficult; documentation style poorly used |
| *Process* | Shows abundant evidence of careful planning and drafting and attention to peer and teacher comments | Shows evidence of careful planning and drafting and some attention to peer and teacher comments | Shows some evidence of planning and drafting, though some drafts may be less considered, and some attention to peer and teacher feedback | Shows only a little evidence of planning and drafting and attention to peer and teacher feedback | Shows little or no evidence of planning, drafting, or attention to peer and teacher feedback |